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Karen AP7

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appease the Lord of heaven and earth and to find out the guilty persons.

685 538

On the subject of stealing the exhortation of the elders was not to steal, destroy, defraud, or act dishonestly. Such deeds are by no means secret. Even though unconfessed, they become manifest in the ordeal by water and in that of ascending a tree. The God of heaven sees. The Lord of the mountains and hills, "Thi Hko Mū Xa," sees. If one is hungry, one should work, should bend the back. If one wants fish, one should use the hand-net. If one desires game, let one repair to the jungle for it. Families are to be fed in this way, not by stealing or by running into debt.

A person who had been caught stealing might be let off, if it was his first offense and he restored the stolen property and promised to reform. If, however, he became a confirmed thief, he was sold into slavery. In some parts of the Toungoo district it was not uncommon for one guilty of stealing to pay the penalty with his life. If positive proof was lacking and there was doubt as to his guilt, the ordeal by water was resorted to.

682 538

Murder was, of course, utterly condemned in the sayings of the elders, for "man is not like the beasts. He has a Lord and Master. We are the children of Thi Hko, of Y'wa who created us. Therefore, do not kill one another." The murderer will be surrendered to the Lord of the lands and will be put to death. He can not escape. His body will be left naked in the fields, and the vultures will devour it. "These things," the elders declare, "have we seen with our own eyes, and we know them, and they have often happened among us." However, the circumstances under which a murder was committed were taken into account. A homicide at a drunken feast was considered an accident, for it was thought that the one guilty of the crime would not have committed it had he been sober. No cause for an action existed in such a case.

761 672

Men killed while taking part in a foray were to be redeemed, that is, a fine was to be paid for them, unless the leader had been excused from such payment in advance.[4] Likewise, the accidental death of a man during a trading, hunting, or other trip undertaken at the request of another, was chargeable to the latter, because otherwise it would not have occurred.

682 628

The recognized way of bringing to justice an offender who was accused of causing the death of another, was for the near relatives

[4] See p. 157.